HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

Placemaking Programme Action Plan Gillingham, Kent

June 24

Contents

Table of Contents

Introduction: The Main Challenges 2
Introduction: the main challenges 2
About the High Streets Task Force and Report Authors 3
Recommendations 4
1: Improving the look and feel of the town centre 5
2: Improving the functionality of the town centre 11
3: Improving the town centre offer 13
4: Creating opportunities to change 15
5: Improving place management 17
Appendix 1: the 4Rs Framework 19
Appendix 2: Attendance List 21
Appendix 3: Workshop Findings 22

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Introduction: the main challenges

This report identifies potential placemaking interventions for consideration by local stakeholders in the development of a place activation plan for Gillingham town centre. Drawing together evidence provided by local stakeholders including the council, together with High Streets Task Force experts, this report outlines potential quick wins, longer term ambitions, and links to supporting resources. This encompasses events, festivals, pop-up retail, reuse of vacant shops, or basic improvements to the appearance of the high street or town centre, together with the trialing of new activities to diversify or adapt the offer to meet the needs of future users. The suggestions are designed to be used as guidance in ongoing discussions in Gillingham. Many places face challenges which require large scale investment in physical regeneration and have long-term plans or a vision. We also acknowledge how community stakeholders have been active and engaged in the high street for many years and how their focus has shifted to providing basic needs for local people. To be clear, this report should complement these existing plans and activities by providing ideas for short-term activation and meanwhile activity, whilst places also tackle more strategic goals. The intention is to provide stakeholders with a list of options, which they should discuss and prioritise, taking forward what they consider to be most viable given local capacity and resourcing.

Evidence from Gillingham was collated from a Placemaking Workshop led by High Streets Task Force Experts from the IPM, which took place on 03rd June 2024. Participants included representatives from the council, businesses, community organisations **(**Error! Reference source not found.**).** The views expressed obviously only represent those who attended but there was a diverse range of stakeholders with different perspectives and useful contributions were made from all. The workshop involved participants in completing three group exercises, thi 1) future changes participants want for the town centre, 2) barriers to making change happen; and 3) potential quick wins. We have captured and grouped all the specific ideas supplied by every participant in Appendix 3: Workshop Findings. From this evidence, we have identified the following priorities:

- **Creating a safer and more welcoming town centre should be at the forefront of future vision, long-term regeneration plans and short-term placemaking activity**
- **Improving both the quantify and clarity of marketing communications about the offer and events in the town centre**
- **Improving the basic appearance of the town centre, including public realm, frontages and key gateway sites**
- **Establishing more events on different scales in the town centre, whilst giving providing more publicity to existing events**
- **Establishing a wider network of stakeholders to add additional capacity and creating sub-groups of multi-sector teams to lead the delivery of specific work streams**

Clearly not everything can be done at once and the next step will be to address the challenge of who will take responsibility for leading the delivery of specific actions and when. There is an expectation, however, business and community groups will take greater responsibility for leading, coordinating and delivering activity, facilitated by local government when necessary. Delivering the project ideas will

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require effective communication and collaboration between these stakeholders and it is important they coordinate their activities more effectively. Using data and evidence to prioritise the allocation of resources, and evaluating the impact of activities, interventions, and experiments will strengthen the value and satisfaction for all.

About the High Streets Task Force and Report Authors

The High Streets Task Force

The Task Force is an alliance of placemaking experts working to redefine the high street. We provide guidance, tools, and skills to help communities, partnerships and local government transform their high streets. The programme, funded by HM Government, will run in England until September 2024.

The report authors

Professor Steve Millington is a Senior Fellow and a director of the Institute of Place Management, based at Manchester Metropolitan University. His academic career spans over 20 years, during which he has worked on several projects including the IPM's Vital and Viable programme and the placemaking programme for the High Streets Task Force for England. He is co-editor of two books, *Cosmopolitan Urbanism* and *Rethinking the Cultural Economy* and has written many articles about placemaking.

Dr. Michael Sewell is a Research Associate at the Institute of Place Management, affiliated with Manchester Metropolitan University. His research focuses on heritage and place and how towns change and adapt over the centuries. His research also extends to exploring place-based partnerships and internal dynamics influencing their longevity and effectiveness as part of the IPM's research team.

This report marks the end of the direct support offered through the High Streets Task Force, but online resources, training and support are available through the website[1].Thank you for participating in the High Streets Task Force Programme. With your permission, the High Streets Task Force would like to check in with you in a few months' time to evaluate how the delivery of your transformation plan is progressing. Please indicate whether this is possible to the Taskforce Operations team.

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[1] https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/

Recommendations

In creating this Action Plan, Taskforce experts draw on wider research and evidence compiled by the Institute of Place Management (IPM), a professional body and research team based at Manchester Metropolitan University. The overarching theme of this report is **Reinventing**, which forms one stage on a larger routemap to place transformation developed by the IPM (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The 4Rs help people to develop their plans for the high street by distinguishing between the processes of: Repositioning (analysis and decision making), Rebranding (communication), Restructuring (place management and planning), and Reinventing (effecting change). Effecting change involves creating activities to increase footfall and spend, attract a more diverse mix of visitors, or encourage people to stay longer by creating a more appealing place.

Whereas the 4Rs provide stakeholders with a strategic guide for activating a long-term vision, to help stakeholders identify and respond to their local challenges, the recommendations draw on the IPM's 25 Priorities, which are organised into five basic questions:

What affects the look and feel of the high street?

4) Experience 5) Appearance 12) Place marketing 20) Crime and Safety 22) Liveability

How does the high street function?

1) Activity Hours 7) Necessities 14) Accessibility 11) Walkability 24) Functionality

What does the high street have to offer?

2) Retail Offer 8) Anchors 9) Non-Retail Offer 10) Merchandise 16) Attractiveness 17) Markets 18) Recreational Space

How does the high street need to change?

15) Diversity 19) Barriers to entry 21) Adaptability 25) Innovation 23) Redevelopment Plans

How is the high street managed?

3) Vision and strategy 6) Place management 15) Networks and partnership

This framework is used to organise the evidence gathered from the workshop, town tour, and background research. The tables below, therefore, summarise the views of all participants, aligned with the most appropriate of the five themed priorities.

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1: Improving the look and feel of the town centre

Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
1. **Safety/Crime:** Gillingham town centre has a poor reputation for safety	Work with police to assess the potential to increase visible policing in the centre e.g. mobile/pop-up presence Review crime data and liaise with police, health authority and community organisations to discuss solutions to specific crime problems e.g. ASB, business crime, issues related to drink/alcohol Review CCTV coverage of the town centre and its effectiveness Establish a plan for basic improvements to the town centre, from litter collection to basic repairs to nudge public perception Encourage appropriate temporary/mobile uses on pedestrianised streets to support activity after the shops close Extend deployment of street pastors and other volunteers to add additional visibility to reassure visitors Introduce clear signing to improve legibility by reinforcing a clear mental map of the shape of the town centre and reinforce its walkability	Ensure ongoing monitoring of crime and safety as a regular part of the business of a town centre network. Police to establish more presence in the town. Establish a long term vision for Gillingham which makes safety in the town centre a priority. As part of long term redevelopment plans consider features which will help tackle perceptions of safety e.g. building frontages which encourage natural surveillance during the day and after dark Establish a business crime reduction partnership Ensure police representation in ongoing place boards or networks. Work with community organisations to establish a safe haven for younger people in the town centre Commission a night time safety audit e.g. Westminster Women's Safety Audit	Placemaking through lighting installations Safety and Crime Understanding Public Priorities for Policing Safe and secure town centres at night toolkit | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk) CCTV in town centre: three case studies Check your local crime data Crime Survey 2022 Report | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk) HSTF case study: Birmingham City Centre and the Colmore Business District | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk) Business Crime Reduction Partnership

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Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
2. **Place Marketing:** Gillingham town centre has a poor reputation. The promotion of town centre offer, and events is not well supported by existing promotional channels. Local stakeholders need to establish more control over the place narrative, promote the positive attributes of the town centre, and intentionally nudge perceptions – especially amongst the local population to establish greater pride in the town. Existing local heritage is not well used in branding and identification of Gillingham as a destination	Review how Gillingham is represented via existing websites and wider channels such as TripAdvisor. For guidance: see Place Sentiment Analysis At the bare minimum local stakeholders should follow each other on social media, like / share each other's posts, and to use consistent hashtags e.g. Establish a communications forum to at and start coordinating and promoting existing activities and events. Use this forum to engage local traders. Identify and celebrate local businesses and promote offers and occasions e.g. flower shops ahead of Valentine's and Mother's Day Create online content and share good news and events on a regular (daily) basis more widely. Focus on the town centre rather than the wider area. Begin to develop a vernacular brand for Gillingham – look, feel and brand of the street e.g. in alignment with other improvements.	Encourage local businesses to take up training and business support in online marketing and digital communications. Create a dedicated 'single point of truth' community or business led webpage for the town centre, however, ensure this is regularly maintained and updated. . Establish regular digital comms across a range of online channels. Keep to common themes and consistent messaging in tone and clarity. Establish a unique identity and USP for Gillingham for communicating with the local community. Develop a Design Guide to direct a consistent branding across new development projects. This should consider a consistent palette of materials for carriageways and footways; a suite of street furniture; a suite of street and ambient light fittings and approach to planting i to create a consistent quality and cohesive visual character within the town's heart.	Rebranding the High Street Telling your story Personalities of Historic Places (video) Place Brand Leaders Best practice guide: place marketing and branding Decentralised place branding through multiple authors and narratives: the collective branding of a small town in Sweden Digital, cultural, and social connectivity Grimsby Retailers in Partnership CIC From Neighbours to Neighbourhood: Learning how to boost Pride in Place Heritage and Place Branding Case Studies How can I engage with and make the most of heritage?

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Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
3. **Appearance (greenery)**: Gillingham high street lacks greenery, planting	Establish an informal planting group to take on forgotten spaces and grot spots Organise a call for action to green Gillingham to grow volunteer capacity e.g. run a community planting day Encourage businesses and property to install baskets and/or planters outside their premises - establish a best 'shop front garden' competition. Link volunteer groups across the town and form a green alliance or network to take responsibility for managing specific planting schemes.	Ensure long term redevelopment plans contribute to greening the high street e.g. install planters which both discourage pavement parking and green the high street. Establish a town centre wide in Bloom competition. Establish a contiguous green route from the station to the Great Lines Heritage Park Remove the excess vegetation and derelict buildings on the corner of Marlborough Road/High Street/Brompton Road to create a clear line of sight to the green space – or even acquire this land for public use and extend the park.	Improving Access to Greenspace Pocket Park: Product Urban Design Trees in hard landscapes Façade Gardens Guides for creating parklets Incredible Edible Home - Edible Estates Green and blue infrastructure: Best practice and case studies

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Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
4. **Appearance:** (**litter**), litter and uncollected commercial waste are noticeable – impacting negatively on first impressions	Review waste collection timings and impact – and evaluate feasibility of revised or additional collections – consider commercial waste as well This is a management issue and the temptation to provide a physical solution by introducing larger bins that can be emptied less frequently must be resisted as they are out of scale in the public realm and constrict accessibility Litter is a particular issue on some of the entry points to the town centre – clean ups are needed on key walking routes Education and awareness is important – fostering a pride in the town centre. A zero tolerance policy – bag it and take it home.	Establish monthly clean up sessions – such as highly visible volunteer-led litter picking to bring attention to issues of litter and inspire more pride in the environment Hold an annual big clean-up day – e.g. A Spring clean with concerted effort from the council, business and community Engage local business with commercial and packaging reduction awareness Develop a Town Centre Management and Maintenance Plan to ensure resources are focussed on key destinations and connecting routes by developing a hierarchy of zones e.g. Premium, Good and Standard which sets out the quality and frequency of maintenance operations required	Pride in Place: Tackling Environmental Incivilities Great Public Spaces: Guide and Evaluation Tool Friends of Queensbury High Street – Litter Pickers What makes for happy places?

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Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
5. **Appearance** (Shop Fronts); Many shops fronts look tired and one or two dilapidated	Undertake a ground floor assessment of the town centre e.g. for guidance see: Plinth Rating Manual Identify the ownership / commercial agents responsible for every property on the high street Start to approach business and property owners and ask them to fix issues quickly e.g. basic repairs, cleaning, and painting. Display creative window vinyls on empty units – ensure consistently across the town centre e.g. vary with seasonal events, Valentine's Day, Easter, Summer events, 5th November, Remembrance Day, Christmas. Hold a shop window / store front competition.	Assess the feasibility of establishing a shop front scheme e.g. emulate the Vacant Shop scheme in Waterlooville. Establish a landlords and commercial agents register Long term plans should aim to secure direct funding towards matched funded shop front improvement grants. Incorporate Design Guidance into Local Plan to address varied business signage styles / sizes. If negotiation with property owners fails explore the potential of enforcement orders such as Section 215 maintenance notice (building repairs)	Reviving Historic Town Centres See: Tyldesley High Street The Art of Window Design Signage Guidance Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access Case Studies: Architectural Heritage Fund

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Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
6. **Appearance:** the town centre might benefit from more colourful and creative interventions that add character and distinction, but also to engender greater pride in place	Trial small scale creative interventions. Use local artists and encourage younger people to get involved. Identify a list of specific sites to start with. Consider creating art on utility boxes, bollards and benches to begin creative measures in the High Street. Establish a shutter clean up or art scheme Identify and celebrate local heroes or notable people from Gillingham's recent history	Consider scaling up to include more substantive artwork on frontages, gable ends and alleyways. Consider low cost / simple decorative lighting to create a safer and more welcoming environment after dark. Link creative interventions to enhancing internal connectivity and place identity cohesively. Scale up shutter art to encompass the entire length of the high street.	Meanwhile city: How temporary interventions create welcoming places with a strong identity IPM Case Study: Pickle Illustration) Street Art and Community in Oxford Why Delightful Public Spaces Matter Placemaking through lighting installations A Public Art Strategy for Exeter

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2: Improving the functionality of the town centre

Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
1. **Necessities:** several workshop participants referred to parking as an issue Although a necessity, arguments over parking can be a red-herring – when other activities to draw footfall and spend can be more effective e.g. activity hours Indeed, the presence of cars on parts of the high street was noted by the police and others as a danger	Survey existing parking provision within walking distance of the high street Review car park fees and time limits. e.g. consider pay on exit systems to increase dwell time, or premium spaces in the heart of the town centre could be managed proactively to ensure 'churn' by increasing the parking charge and reducing the stay time. Liaise with local traders to review car parking, delivery and supply needs. Install temporary signposting to existing parking provision Engage parking and public transport operators in your partnership meetings	Initiate an active travel campaign to encourage more people who are able to ditch the car and walk or cycle to the high street – especially for short journeys - taking pressure off existing parking demand Consider reclaiming the public realm by introducing car free Sundays, as in European towns, where flexible traffic management such as restricting access or reversing one-way routes is used to support other uses (markets and events) within the town centre (e.g. Bagni di Lucca in Italy) Reward visitors who arrive by active or public travel e.g. discounts at local businesses. Enforcement against pavement parking Consider flexible traffic management within town centre streets – time restrictions used to allow evening activity within pedestrianised streets (trialling at weekends/ busiest days)	People, places and parking process: A multi-level review of parking provision in town centres Innovative Practices in Parking Provision Guidance on Parking Provision in Town Centres Gear Change: a vision for cycling and walking The Pedestrian Pound A dozen effective interventions to reduce car use in European cities: Lessons learned from a meta-analysis and transition management Defining the 15 Minute city Campaign for Better Transport

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2. **Walking:** issues related to signposting and wayfinding were raised by workshop participants	Complete an audit of existing signage (quality, location, and relevance). Trial new pathfinding routes, whether through banners or public art. Improve connectivity between key anchors through basic signage and pathfinding e.g., use planters and simple creative installations to mark routes. Evaluate your trial and construct a longer term a wayfinding action plan, which aligns with wider town centre regeneration plans. Consider community sourced wayfinding suggestions	Aim to create a safe, contiguous and consistent active travel route through the town centre e.g. ensure long term redevelopment plans address improving pavement quality, create more space for pedestrians and on-street activity e.g. Footpaths Design on Renovation of City Centres: A Model of Assessments Introduce new, informative, and creative signage which contributes to a sense of destination. A long term collective ambition might be to emulate Sheffield Grey to Green, the UK largest green street	Signage guidance for outdoor access: a guide to good practice Walkinverness Wayfinding 'How To' Guide Vision for Thriving Gainsborough 2024 | Pedestrian Railings Removal London's local high streets: The problems, potential and complexities of mixed street corridors
3. **Activity**: The town centre does not have a reliable or consistent method for capturing footfall. Without this data and data insights to inform decision making there is concern opening times and event scheduling happen at less than optimum times. Footfall traffic through the busy station would suggest the town centre underserves those commuting elsewhere both in the early morning and during the early evening	Review evidence from the Task Force's annual review of footfall to inform trials of revised opening times e.g. consider 10-6pm or 11-7 pm opening to allow people who work elsewhere to shop locally close to home. Use manual footfall data to review and trial revised opening times e.g. retail, consider 10am-6pm or 11am-7pm opening to allow people who work elsewhere to shop locally close to home, Share footfall data to inform scheduling of opening times and events	Trial existing and new events in the early evening to test demand for evening activity. Coordinate temporary opening times to align with evening events. Establish new early evening events programme e.g. street food market. Invest in reliable footfall counting technology.	Establishing a footfall baseline Manual footfall counting guidance What does a future proof high street look like? Policy Paper Alcohol Licensing and The Night-time Economy: New Strategies to Support Vibrant Communities | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk) Policy paper: Creating a nightlife plan for your city | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)

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3: Improving the town centre offer

Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
1. **Retail and hospitality offer:** there needs to be more opportunities to trial refreshed and diverse retail options	Trial pop-up retail and markets and evaluate the impact. Showcase diversity in the community through food event in the town centre, or trial a street food market e.g. see Foodie Friday (Stockport)	Use evidence from trials and work with property owners and commercial agents to curate new tenants for empty units in high street. Work with existing hospitality businesses to establish a regular food day/weekend/festival.	Repurposing Retail Space Alternative High Street Advice for the hospitality sector on outdoor dining Street-trading
2. **Non-retail offer:** Comments noted that there are not enough things to do in Gillingham, especially during the evening	Host a range of events – suggestions include markets, antique fairs, food festivals, art and music) Develop and promote existing heritage trails for the high street to make a tourist trail – using existing sites and business e.g. the Town Hall , museums.	Approach property owners of vacant units and establish a rotating programme of pop-ups featuring local arts and craft, music, retail, Establish a clearer vision and strategy to make existing cultural spots thrive and make common spaces and unused places (e.g., empty shops) approachable and shared by the community, with a much stronger focus on targeting younger people and supporting the creative economy. Work with public sector authorities to review how more services might be delivered directly on the high street.	How cities can reimagine public spaces to support children and families Repurposing Retail Space Alternative High Street Exploring young people's views of their local area related to the 20-minute neighbourhood policy: a national cross-sectional study Re-imagining urban spaces to help revitalise our high streets Explore Indie Independents Business Hub Architecture & Design Scotland 'Town Centre Living: A caring Place

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	Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
3.	**Markets and events:** there are not enough events taking place on the high street	Engage local market traders on improving the presentation of stalls and merchandise. Trial alternative markets designed to appeal to different user groups e.g. Sunday market, evening market, food, craft, younger people etc Trial using existing market franchises e.g. The Teenage Market Work with Chatham arts and crafts markets to see if one could be launched in Gillingham from local traders and businesses.	Establish an annual events programme of different markets e.g. suggestions include a youth festivals, food festivals or Music Festival Restart the Will Adams festival in the high street. To bring out local and international themes. Review ongoing markets, how they are marketed, and their impact and build a business case for investment.	Street Market: Quick Read Guide Outdoor Arts Festivals and Events Guide A guide for the planning and organisation of community festivals Market Toolkit for Parish and Town Councils Queen's market: a successful and specialised market serving diverse communities in Newham and beyond (case study) Markets as Social Spaces

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4: Creating opportunities to change

Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
1. **Diversity:** the town centre needs to offer more for a wider range of people and communities	Provide more activities for children and families e.g. community games, student market/fashion show, youth market Trial pop-up games/play areas using simple materials e.g. see Encouraging Exploration and Play in Underused Public Spaces: An Activity Trail Review the Stage of Ageing report Ensure events, markets and pop-ups are inclusive of potential new user groups – e.g. trialling new products. Trial The Teenage Market Explore the potential for transformation of streets to promote different ethnic communities into the centre – trial through an extended street food offer.	Establish Gillingham as a well-being and community hub. See: The Haven Community Hub (Westcliff-on-Sea) Identify gaps in the local area/Medway to appeal to wider audiences. See: Barnstaple Cultural Plan Establish quiet spaces / Open Access Sensory Areas/ multi-generational spaces to encourage mutually beneficial interaction between generations Use empty shops for safe havens or a Young Persons social zone	Re-imagining urban spaces to help revitalise our high streets Explore Indie Independents Business Hub Caistor and District Community Trust: Breathing life back into the heart of a market town How listening to kids leads to better urban design How cities can reimagine public spaces to support children and families

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Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
2. **Innovation:** There needs to be a willingness to engage with ideas and projects	Plenty of ideas were shared during the meeting, but they need to be given the go ahead and the local authority needs to allow events and projects to happen. Engage with the local community to understand what kind of projects they would like to see. The night-time economy is the most challenging, think about innovative ideas to tackle this issue. Identify the issues preventing shop owners from providing a greater quantity of local goods/merchandise. Use pop-ups to evaluate and test local catchment readiness for new products and services	Begin to allow community members and organisations to trial new ideas for the High Street, such as the **I-Street**. Develop local partnerships that continuously promote creative and experimental ideas in approaches to the town centre. Establish a merchandising plan for each independent business. Work with commercial agents and landlords so that in the long term the selection of new tenants is a more collaborative process and new business add value to the town's offer.	Reviving Historic Town Centres IPM Case Study: Sustainable Wantage | Resources ALL IN(NOVATION): A Social Return on Investment (SROI) Analysis of Eastlight Community Homes' All In Incubator Withington Case Study Merchandising The Customer Experience of Town Centres

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5: Improving place management

Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
1. **Vision and strategy:** Gillingham requires a distinct vision, which foregrounds safety	Reconvene the existing stakeholder group • gather and reflect on evidence/data in relation to the town centre. • Undertake a visioning exercise to collectively agree a long-term ambition, aligned with long term redevelopment plans • Start with issues around safety and crime	Establish a collective and flexible vision for the future, that is based around safety, appearance and offer.	Place Marketing and Branding Best Practice Guide A Vision for High Street Regeneration Altrincham revitalisation Shrewsbury Big Town Plan
2. **Place management:** the various organisations responsible for the town centre needs to be coordinated or joined up under a single organisation	Agree a communications platform for stakeholders to talk and share good news and announcements. Stakeholders to work closely with the neighbourhood manager to identity gaps in resourcing and provision for the operational aspects of the high street. Medway Council needs to review internal processes in terms of how it supports its town centres, especially Gillingham – to reduce silo working and provide better support for its high street community e.g. emulate the resource page Bristol City Council has put together	Establish the case for a place-based partnership to bring people together; a town tzar to lead and help co-ordinate efforts e.g. emulate the model of the High Street Accelerators programme	Developing strategies for effective town centres Future Place: Unlocking the potential of places The High Street Report This must be the place

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Challenge/evidence	Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
3. **Networks and partnerships**: Medway Council with a much wider stakeholder network in order to bring much needed expertise and additional capacity to revitalise the town centre. This might be Taskforce, chaired by a non-local government representative, involving senior leaders across a range of sectors The Taskforce should be focused much less on strategic development and planning, and much more on delivery and activation The Taskforce should coordinate a network of sub-groups tasked with leading on delivery of specific and themed delivery plans – in areas where they have expertise See: High street 2030	Undertake community capacity mapping to understand the range and volume of local volunteer capacity, and approach new groups who might additional capacity on a temporary or ongoing basis. Engage with the chairman of the city of Rochester society who helped lead the High Street Heritage Action Zone project to learn about partnership and collaborative working. Engage with the Love Chatham group to learn from best practice. Establish a community led – independently chaired network or forum and create sub-groups to take responsibility for delivery of specific actions The forum should begin to co-ordinate different levels of government and the different stakeholder groups in the town – facilitating cross-sector working and coordination of markets, events, and festivals.	Initially this group can be fairly informal, but as ambitions change so must the partnership structure and governance arrangements. Create subgroups to lead on delivery of specific activity, for example: 1. Safety and Crime 2. Social media and promotion of the town centre 3. Events, markets, and festivals 4. Green town network, planting, litter picking 5. Community, heritage and cultural activity 6. Small business engagement Furthermore, this group should collectively scope out funding opportunities from a range of sources – rather than being dependent on local government to draw down regeneration funds from central government.	Saving the High Street – the community takeover Vital and Viable Factor: Community Power Partnerships Networks and Partnerships with Councils High street 2030 Task Force report shows local partnerships are key to unlocking high streets potential | High Streets Task Force Place Partnerships Best Practice Guide: Partnership Development Best Practice Guide: Developing Delivery Plans Networks and Partnerships with Councils Task Force report shows local partnerships are key to unlocking high streets potential | High Streets Task Force

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Appendix 1: the 4Rs Framework

Gillingham and the High Streets Task Force (HSTF) began working together in 2022. Based on discussions with the council, the subsequent *Unlocking Your Place Potential Report* (UYPP) outlined how the Task Force can provide further support for the high street. This report suggested the following priorities:

1. Perception of crime
2. Appearance of the High Street
3. More activity in the town centre needed.
4. Town identity, what is Gillingham's Bee?
5. Lots of focus on strategy, but more capacity needed to deliver quick wins

The report recommended stakeholders first engage with online support provided by Taskforce, specifically:

- a) Driving Footfall to Your High Street
- b) Make your own Transformation Routemap

Finally, the High Streets Task Force provided a Placemaking Workshop in March 2024, the outcomes of which forms the basis of this report.

In short, Medway Council and local stakeholders need to work together to amplify positive messages, implement more creative interventions and deal with the issues of ASB, especially the perceptions of safety and crime in the town center. There is tremendous potential for Gillingham, it has a unique heritage and sporting town centre offer. Successful partnership work has already been done in the area of Medway and this knowledge needs to be used. This will work if the local stakeholders, including businesses, community groups, and the Council, are willing to collaborate together to coordinate safety and appearance measures, community driven branding and a development of a communications plan which will engage with the town's multi-cultural population; create a safer destination; and offer a diverse range of activities for the town center.

The 4Rs are not mutually exclusive but are connected; each is a potential starting point on a transformation journey, and different places will be at different stages. The Four Rs are a centrepiece of our community toolkit. An editable version of the transformation routemap with instructions can be downloaded here. Depending on where you start, this will take time to deliver but is a useful tool for planning both short and long-term priorities. Actions under each R may happen simultaneously, consecutively, or repeatedly.

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Reposition: knowing your town, using relevant data and information to develop a collaborative, inspiring vision that achieves change
Reinvent: activate and animate the town, diversify its attractions. Multifunctional places offer different things to draw in footfall and spend
Rebrand: establishing an identity and sense of place that can engender pride, commitment and attachment and communicating this across the whole community
Restructure: putting in place the capacity, leadership and partnerships to deliver change. Considering large-scale spatial change to transform your centre
Repositioning
Reinventing
Rebranding
Restructuring
The
4Rs
of renewal

If delivered correctly through effective leadership and collaboration with all key stakeholders, placemaking has the potential to improve the local economy, environment, and society, as well as provide cultural benefits. The underlying aim of any placemaking intervention should be to create and promote places that are sustainable, attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy, and friendly. Temporary activation of underutilised or neglected sites can showcase these to potential investors. Reinventing, however, is just one element of the routemap. It is important, therefore, to work through the implications of the recommendations above in terms of the other Rs on the routemap.

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Appendix 2: Attendance List

Insert attendance list.

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Appendix 3: Workshop Findings

First, workshop participants were asked to individually identify one broad change that should happen to attract people to the centre and to ensure its sustainability. Each group was then asked to agree what the most important change should be. For the second exercise, participants were asked to consider what barriers need to be removed to enable change to happen. Here there were fewer responses, but in summary, participants revealed their frustration about the speed of change or decision-making, together with some reflection on the need for improved collaboration and cooperation between different stakeholder groups a call for more community involvement. The final workshop exercise asked participants to highlight activities that can be done quickly to animate the centre. The responses are detailed in the tables below. A range of positive ideas were suggested, with notable clusters concerning:

Look and feel	1. Safety and Crime
	2. Appearance
	3. Marketing
Functionality	4. Neccessitites
	5. Walking
	6. Activity
Offer	7. Retail Offer
	8. Non-Retail Offer
	9. Markets and Events
Change	10. Diversity
	11. Innovation
Management	12. Partnerships
	13. Place Management
	14. Vision and Stratergy

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The look and feel of the centre

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Stakeholder comments	What stop activity from happening? Stakeholder comments	What can be done quickly? Stakeholder comments
Safety/Crime	1. Increased Security 2. Police presence in the evenings as well in the daytime 3. Better policing 4. Camera's working and monitored 5. A feeling of safety 6. People would come if they felt safe which currently is not happening 7. A Safe community that supports local residents 8. Safety 9. Safer environment 10. Gillingham High Street needs t be safe, secure and fun 11. Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour 12. ASB, homeless and cars make it difficult for visitor	13. Lack of Police and multi-agency enforcement and resources to tackle the social issues 14. Perceptions of safety and mis-information	15. Have a police pop up shop like Rainham Kent 16. Arrest more offenders 17. Police presence, not just on match days 18. More policing 19. Police it better 20. Switch on all the lights at night, street lights and business fronts, once a week and offer food and drinking to improve safety 21. Support system for the youths to curb anti-social behaviour
Place Marketing	22. A unique identity within community as its centre/ideas 23. Increased perceptions of safety 24. Promote the activities that are already going on, sappers walk etc.	25. No focus on Gillingham, it is all Medway, no clear community coordination 26. No real USP's for Gillingham 27. Culture/Perception and Historic Issues 28. Historically and Culturally 29. 1984 dockyard closure, which led to local poverty	30. Find Gillingham's Bee 31. Identify identity for Gillingham and promote the best of the town. There are some great places here, raise awareness 32. Establish a distinct identity 33. Make a USP, paint the lampposts the same colour, use visual branding 34. Raise awareness 35. Tackle the historical/culture perception

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Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Stakeholder comments	What stop activity from happening? Stakeholder comments	What can be done quickly? Stakeholder comments
			36. Bring Gillingham's History alive
Appearance	37. Greenery to create green route the high st/lines 38. Rejuvenation-looks tied, worn out 39. A Big splash of colour 40. I would like to see the place cared for in terms of no rubbish, repainted shops, no traffic. 41. Sweep and wash the street pavements 42. Street scene and public space	43. Permission, is it legal or not for street art, lighting etc 44. Perception that it will just be vandalised 45. Investment from local club 46. Permission 47. Lack of empowerment	48. Greening the high street 49. Planting 50. All shops to participate in seasonal window displays 51. All shops to allocated space for a tree or landscape in pots 52. Take charge of the space outside the shop 53. Improve and paint the aesthetical nature 54. Tidy and paint mural on the derelict Mcdonalds frontage 55. Paint some of the walls 56. More colour in the High Street 57. Nucleaus Arts has 00s people who could design artwork for street art 58. Allow Art on the shutters and involve the community 59. Paint or add art to benches, lampposts and phone booths 60. Repair the walls around the tree wells 61. Deep clean 62. Find a solution for litter 63. Clean the High Street 64. Plant flowers 65. Faily collection of rubbish, civic enforcement of illegal rubbish dumping

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Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Stakeholder comments	What stop activity from happening? Stakeholder comments	What can be done quickly? Stakeholder comments
			66. Tidy the high street. Remove bench from Green Street 67. Community Litter Pick 68. Great Gillingham Litter Pick 69. Deep Clean Streets 70. Replace Rubbish with Green Planters 71. Clean High Street 72. Set up group for litter pick 73. Clean the rubbish up 74. Clean it up 75. Tidy up the town 76. Clean up, brighten up 77. Monthly litter picks 78. Get on top of rubbish clearance 79. Donate a window to be used by new businesses for marketing. 80. Develop colourways, agency for residents and businesses to help make real and quick deployment of colour 81. Paint the town campaign
Experience	82. Young people to feel welcome with things to do after school 83. More cultural engagement 84. Make the High Street "sexy" and cool		85. Invite new audiences

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Improving centre functionality

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Stakeholder comments	What stop activity from happening? Stakeholder comments	What can be done quickly? Stakeholder comments
Necessities	86. Parking and or inter mode transport, bus-depot's and electric charging 87. Short term free parking 88. High Street needs to be a pedestrian zone	89.	90. Gates on end of the high street to stop cars and vans 91. Gates to control traffic and stop illegal parking
Walkability	92. Wayfinding	93.	94. Improve wayfinding to variety of venues and places in the town centre 95. More signable and traffic control
Activity	96. Reduce Empty Shops 97. Address Empty Properties	98.	99. Establish the ownership of the empty buildings

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Improving the centre offer

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Stakeholder comments	What stop activity from happening? Stakeholder comments	What can be done quickly? Stakeholder comments
Retail Offer	100. Attract Big-Name Stores 101. Improve Retail Offer 102. More independent shops 103. More local shops with a sustainability module 104. Rejuvenate shopping demand and make HS more personal to increase footfall and help decrease ASB and gambling shops	105. Rent relief 106. Red tape	107. Temporary/Meanwhile Use in Empty Shops 108. Do up Shop Fronts 109. Easy access to empty buildings for pop-up services to happen Pop-up uses for empty properties
Non-retail offer	110. FKB Alfresco and positive nighttime economy 111. Somewhere nice to eat after work 112. Family Restaurants		113. Heritage Project, Temporary Blue plaques informing of the history of the building 114. After the markets, fill the space with fake grass and deck chairs and put on small events
Markets and events	115. Central Hub for events 116. Live vents that draw crowds 117. Varied event calendar, brand identity, marketing strategy, X-mas light switch on, High Street Trails, immersive events and partnerships 118. Events planning and promotion	120. Resources and regulations	121. Map Cultural events and assets 122. Family friendly and inclusive events 123. Review of the Will adams festival for the high street 124. Street food market on Fridays 125. Community led street events 126. Party and picnic in the High Street 127. Variety of different markets, crafts, food, vintage and pop-up

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Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Stakeholder comments	What stop activity from happening? Stakeholder comments	What can be done quickly? Stakeholder comments
	119. Regulate one event weekend. Live Street events to encompass all ages and cultures/heritage		128. Work with chatham festival to trial arts and crafts market 129. Arts Trail, Pow Festival 130. Street festival which is promoted and police presence, promote local businesses 131. Community events, food festival, one big medway event each year 132. Event Calander run these annually 133. Use a social media platform for all businesses and arts co-operations to provide a singular page for local events/

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Creating opportunities for change

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Stakeholder comments	What stop activity from happening? Stakeholder comments	What can be done quickly? Stakeholder comments
Diversity	134. More welcoming with more family and evening activities 135. Empty units made available for community activities 136. Things for young people to do 137. Activate Evening economy 138. More evening activity to dissuade ASB	139. Time capacity 140. Permission from owners/council 141. Not knowing who to ask and who to get permission from 142. Finance 143. Apathy 144. Ignorance and bureaucracy 145. Permission	146. Involve students 147. Convert rooms above high street into student accommodation 148. Engage with the student community based in medway 149. Promote youth clubs and pop-ups
Barriers to entry	150. Leadership		151. Make information accessible for residents and businesses
Innovation	152. A desire to be curious and experiment	153. Fear of failing 154. Leadership to drive the project forward 155. Imagination 156. Lack of bravery and confidence 157. Talk not action 158. Inspiration 159. Bravery 160. Reliance on grants	161. I Street: new form of enterprise

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Improving place management

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Stakeholder comments	What stop activity from happening? Stakeholder comments	What can be done quickly? Stakeholder comments
Place Management		162. Lack of understanding of legal permissions 163. Leadership to co-ordinate 164. Leadership to manage and co-ordinate 165. Trust between community and council 166. Leadership 167. Organisation 168. Lack of communication with council and landlords	169. Town Tzars 170. Have a presence in the market to improve connections and communication, share ideas 171. Streamline permissions 172. Talk to the community, broader than this group 173. Community engagement, ask local people what they want 174. Establish who knows what to enable pop-ups to work 175. Central point needed for collaboration to happen 176. Create Gillingham champions group to provide leadership and agree project 177. Be realistic 178. Build collaboration between businesses and owners and shop keepers 179. Don't rely on the SPF.
Vision and Strategy		180. Lack of a vehicle for collective ownership and vision 181. Lack of joined up thinking. 182. Agree buying in to a vision	183. Share vision with community 184. Working together
Networks and Partnerships	185. People/Community Involvement	186. Community enthusiasm 187. Not working together	193. Convene a Bigger conversation to gain ideas and consult and engage

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		188. Not people co-operating 189. Lack of communication and linking together stakeholders 190. The right team 191. Collaboration 192. Nothing is stopping us, multiagency is key	194. Establish a retailers forum/association 195. Form a town centre team from local businesses and working groups 196. Cross collaborate to co-ordinate activities 197. Identify the key working groups to take the project forward 198. Get a sports linkage strategy, Medway park (linked to local cafes and museum} and the Gillingham football club. 199. Collaboration 200. Refresh town centre forum, get all/more shop properties and land owners involved 201. Form an action group immediately 202. Form an action group 203. Engage groups undertaking ASB and multiagency to work together to improve its look and feel

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